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Project I.D. No 140

NAME: Okuda, Mineyo DATE OF BIRTH: 1900 PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama  
Age: 75 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: High school, sewing school

PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1919 Age: 19 M.S. M Port of entry: Seattle  
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer's wife 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of residence: 1. Livingston 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: Christian church  
Community organizations/activities: \_\_\_\_\_

EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Merced  
Name of relocation center: Amache, Colorado  
Dispensation of property: Leased land Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held in camp: 1. Waitress 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
Left camp to go to: \_\_\_\_\_

POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: Fall '45  
Address/es: 1. Livingston 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: Christian church  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Husband died in 1939.

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 7/29/75 Place: Livingston

Translator: Mabel Hall



T: To begin with, tell me your name please.

O: My name is Okuda, Mineyo.

Q: When were you born?

A: In 1900.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Wakayama Prefecture.

Q: What did your family do?

A: It was a farm household.

Q: What did you grow?

A: In those days we were growing rice, oats and vegetables. As I was going to school I did not help much. We hired many people when we harvested rice and oats.

Q: What kind of a man was your father?

A: He brought us up strictly, but he was a very sensible man and sent me to a girls' highschool. In those days only a few girls went to girls' highschool from our village. I took an examination from the sixth grade and entered Wakayama Girls' Highschool.



After I graduated from highschool my parents bought me a sewing machine and sent me to a sewing school for a year as they thought we never knew what kind of misfortune a woman might meet in the future. At school I learned sewing and embroidery. While I was attending the sewing school I was engaged to a man who was my relation. A year later he came home to ~~bring me to~~ America. I came here with him in 1919.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: She was a very gentle woman. She loved me so much that she did not want to part with me, but my father said "if she wants to come home anytime ~~she~~ wants to, so we should let her go when there is a chance of a good marriage." That is how I came here.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was 18 years old. I graduated from highschool when I was 17.

Q: Was your mother a gentle person?

A: Yes, she was very gentle, but ~~she~~ taught me good manners such as greeting guests or serving tea.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: I had one sister and 4 brothers. I was second from the last.



Q: Do you remember about your schooldays?

A: I learned many things.

Q: Did you have fun?

A: I had fun so I could have gone to school longer, but there was an offer of marriage, so my parents thought I should learn domestic things. In Japan they start talking about marriage as soon as you finish highschool, and matchmakers try to arrange marriages. The parents pick whoever they think will make their daughters the happiest. I came here relying on my parents' opinions. In those days there were hardly any love marriages.

Q: Did you know that you were coming to America?

A: When I graduated from highschool I started receiving letters from him, and my uncle acted as a go-between. My cousin was married to Okuda's brother, and they were working as partners here. My husband was his younger brother. I came here thinking I would be able to stand the life of a farmer as I was born as a farmer's daughter.

Q: Have you met Mr. Okuda before?

A: I met his older brother when my cousin married him, so we were related. He was here since he was young so I didn't know him, but I trusted him because of his older brother.



Q: When did you see your husband for the first time?

A: He could not go back to Japan unless he was engaged, so we were engaged. Then he went to Japan after harvesting grape. We were married there and came here in April.

Q: How did you feel when you saw him for the first time?

A: I didn't have any special feeling. I heard from my parents that he was a very sincere and serious man, so I thought he looks like he was.

Q: Were you happy when you saw him for the first time?

A: It was arranged, so I didn't have any special feeling.

Q: In a song it says, "Why does a bride cry tying her gold-brocaded sash?". Did you cry, too?

A: No, I didn't. My cousin was here and wrote me and told me all about here. I knew it was hotter in Livingston than in Hiroshima, so I was prepared for the heat. Indeed, it was hot here without coolers.

Q: Was Mr..Okuda already in Livingston?

A: He was farming here.



Q: Did he farm from the beginning?

A: No, his brother came to America first, and he came here after his brother. He helped his brother who was managing an art goods store in San Francisco with Mr. Yoshitaro Mayeda as partner, but the store was burned to the ground by the great earthquake. Then they decided to go to Livingston on Mr. Abiko's project. My husband had a grocery store at Winters at the time of the earthquake so he took some food to help his brother in San Francisco. He told me that when he went to San Francisco he had to help build roads so he did not get to meet his brother for a week. While he was working dripping with sweat, Mr. Mayeda happened to come by pulling a wagon. He went with Mayeda to the place his brother was staying and gave the food and helped them. My husband closed the store in Winters and came here before his brother did. When my husband's brother and Mr. Mayeda joined him here they bought a piece of land as partners and established the Kisen Farming Company. Before I came here they divided the land, and my husband and his brother worked as partners.

Q: Did you have a wedding ceremony before you came here?

A: Yes.



Q: Where did you have the wedding ceremony?

A: At my husband's home. In Wakayama the weddings are held at the groom's home town. We had our wedding in December, and came here in April. The trip was in place of the honeymoon. My sister was in a rooming business in Seattle at that time. As I had not seen her for a long time, we went to see her as well as sight-seeing. It took about ten days to arrive at Seattle by a foreign ship. We saw Canada<sup>and</sup> Victoria, and stayed in Seattle for a week. We arrived here on April 20. It was a sort of a honeymoon.

Q: What kind of people were on the ship?

A: It was a foreign ship but there were many Japanese on board. I think it was called Ajiya (Asia)-Go. It was a big ship.

Q: Were there any brides?

A: Yes, I think so. There were about 5 women in our room. Men and women stayed in separate rooms.

Q: Were you with other women?

A: Yes, I was.

Q: Even the couples were not together?

A: I think<sup>in</sup> the first class the couple can stay together. All the passengers in our room were Japanese, so we could talk with each other. A lady from Okinawa was a bit hard for us to understand,



but we talked with her. It took one night to go from Victoria to Seattle. The day we arrived in Seattle must have been a holiday or something for there were no immigration officers there, so we had to stay at the Immigration office overnight. There were many beds without mattress. They were hard but we slept there that night. I cannot forget the delicious salmon we had at the Immigration office. Next day we arrived in Seattle, and we took a cab to my sister's. My sister was waiting for us, so we stayed at her hotel and went sight-seeing for a week.

Q: Was the voyage fun?

A: I did not get seasick. We just spent the days resting and talking. After we got off the ship we went sight-seeing. We saw a famous 42-storied building. It was April, and it was raining in Seattle. My sister's friend took us around in a car and showed us places and took us shopping. I came in Kimono, so I had my sister help me buy American clothes.

Q: How did you feel when you had Western clothes on?

A: Sometimes I wore dresses when I was going to school in Japan.

Q: What was your first impression of America?

A: I was too busy to notice as my sister, her friend, my husband's brother came and we had to talk to them. They wanted us to stay longer, but my husband had to go back to work, so we came here together.



Q: Did you think America was a nice place?

A: I thought America was no comparison to Japan. When I arrived at Seattle I was surprised the buildings were very stately compared to those in Wakayama City which was a developed city. I heard and read in letters about America, but when I saw it I thought it was really splendid.

Q: Did you come here after sight-seeing?

A: Yes, by train.

Q: What did you think when you came to Livingston?

A: At that time Livingston was not developed yet. I heard about it from my sister, but there was no electricity then. I think we did without electricity for 5 or 6 years. Finally, Mr. Takahashi and Mr. Hamaguchi had electricity laid on for drying grape. Where we lived was far from there, so we were told that if the neighbors get together and buy a lot of electrical appliances they would install electricity. Therefore we bought them and finally had electricity laid on. When I was in Japan in schooldays I had never lived in a place without electricity. Here we had to cook on kerosene stove, and I had to cook for hired hands, so it was hard. My sister taught me how to cook. I thought it was entirely different from my girlhood. I could not go back to Japan so I had to bear the hardship.



Q: Did you want to go back to Japan?

A: I did not want to go back as I had made up my mind to bear the hardship here. I heard that it was hot here and there were many flies. I came here on April 20, but it was already hot. My husband took me around the village on a horse-drawn buggy to introduce me as we were married in Japan. It was an inconvenient place so it took about 3 days to go around the village. Then we were settled down. Until this house was built here we stayed in the tank house. We stayed upstairs and cooked downstairs. We lived there for 2 to 3 months. It was a completely different life from my girlhood. Everybody who came here had the same kind of hardship. I was too busy to write to Japan so my mother was worried about me and she was the first one to write to me. If I told her that we did not have electricity she would have worried, so I just told her that I was well and doing fine.

Q: Did your hardship begin after you came here?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you work hard?

A: I didn't work in the field.

Q: What did you do?

A: I cooked. In summer season we hired people so I helped cooking. I learned to pack grapes and cut peaches to be dried.



Q: Was it a hard work?

A: Many Mexicans came to do it, so I learned to do it in spare time from cooking. When I came here the grapes were young, and they used to cut the tops of grapes. so I learned to do it. I was young so I did it as an exercise, but when it came to work it was not easy. That was long time ago.

Q: Were you lonesome when you first came here?

A: In Japan I had many friends, but I did not have any friends here at first, so I used to go to my sister's all the time. There were many people from Wakayama Prefecture in my neighborhood, and soon we became good friends and we visited each other, so I was not lonesome. Only I could not understand Mexicans who came to work. I wished I learned English more. I could not make myself understood with my English.

Q: Was this a hot place?

A: Yes, it was very hot. It went over 100 degrees. I heard that it is hotter in Fresno.

Q: Were there trees here?

A: There were some trees around the house. We planted many trees since I came here.



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Q: What was the hardest thing for you when you first came here?

A: That I did not understand the language was the hardest thing.

Q: About how many people did you hire?

A: Mexicans lived in another house, so I did not have to take care of them.

Q: About how many people?

A: In winter time we hired 4 or 5 Japanese for pruning as Mexicans were not skillful for that. We had one or two people working for us all through the year, and at harvest time we hired 14 or 15 Japanese.

Q: Were they Isseis?

A: They were mostly single Isseis, but we hired <sup>a</sup> married couple as cooks for three months during the summer.

Q: What kind of people were single Isseis?

A: They were well educated kind people, and some of them were college graduates. I worked with them in the packing shed, and they were kind to me and called me "Mrs.". I had asked the people at the boarding house to send us good people, so they were refined people, and they worked for us for a long time.



Q: Why were those people single?

A: There were all kinds of people. Some people had wives and children in Japan, and others spent all the money and could not go back to Japan. They worked for us until the war broke out. The things have changed in the past few years. Now the tractors are used, and we don't see a single horse. When we evacuated we left the horses behind.

Q: Do you have any remiscence of the days you first came here?

A: I don't have anything special. I knew I was going to become a Christian when I came here. I was a Buddhist when I was in Japan, but since I came here I thought I would become a Christian, and I was baptized by Rev. Fujii.

Q: When was this?

A: It was on Easter of 1922. My husband had been attending church before, but he waited for me to come here and we were baptized together.

Q: You didn't go to church in Japan, didn't you?

A: I attended Buddhist church. When I was in highschool, I had Christian teachers and friends, so I knew about Christianity. My family's religion was Buddhism since my ancestors, so I was converted since I came here.



Q: Do you think you worked hard since you came here?

A: I think I helped as much as I could.

Q: Did you get up early in the morning?

A: Yes, I got up early.

Q: About what time?

A: I think I got up around 5 o'clock because I had to cook breakfast, and did the housework before we left home at 8 o'clock.

Q: About what time did you work till?

A: When we had hired help we had to quit working at a certain time, so I think we worked till 5 or 6 o'clock.

Q: What time did you go to bed?

A: I had to clean up, so I think I went to bed around 11 o'clock.

Q: Did you wash before you went to bed?

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A: When I had much clothes to wash my husband helped me. I cooked, and my husband help me wash dishes and take care of children. When we had hired helpers I excused myself from church to cook, but my husband continued going to church every Sunday since he was baptized. When I could not attend the church, my husband told me the outline of the sermon. When we went to the church together he helped me get ready. When the children started going to Sunday school I went to church with them. Rev. Fujii was a



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kind pastor and led us to join the Christian circle. It was a simple but good life, but suddenly my husband died of a car accident.

Q: When was that?

A: In 1939 . My relative came from Japan on business, so my husband took them to the Exposition and took them back to their hotel in San Francisco. Then he took tuition to his nephew Richard Okuda who was studying at Healds College in San Francisco. After that he had dinner at a Chinese restaurant <sup>in Oakland</sup> with our oldest son who was studying at University of California, Berkeley. After dinner he said good-bye to his son and got on his way home, but died of car accident at Tracy when his car collided with a speeding car driven by a young man. I waited for him wondering what happened to him. The next morning I received a phonecall telling me about the accident. It was so sudden that I was surprised. Our son, daughter and nephew Richard were in schools, so I had to pay the tuition. Suddenly I had to carry a heavy burden. Mr. Mayeda took me to the undertaker. People were worried that I might ~~I might~~ be frightened, but <sup>with</sup> God's help I kept calm and verified him. My son was having exams at the University of California, so I asked my neighbor to call him and tell him that his father was ill. Strangely enough my son had a headache and could not sleep that night. Then he recieved a phonecall telling him that father was ill. He knew something had happened, so he hurried



home. When he came home I was sitting on a chair, and I said, "I am glad you are home." He came in front of me, and holding my hands said, "Cheer up, Mama. From now on I will take over Papa's work even if I have to absent myself from school, so don't worry, Mama, and please stay strong." I thought, that's it. My husband passed away leaving everything to our children. At that time I felt an ~~urge~~ urge to be strong, and said, "Thank you. Thank you." He said he was going to be absent from school, but he was in the third year in the Engineering Department, and my husband had been looking forward to his future, so I asked him to continue going to school. It was April then, and soon the summer vacation came so he helped drying peach. He never got up early in the morning before, but he got up early to take dried peach to the company. I admired my two children. My daughter helped me cook, and even worked in the field. My husband had been thinking which college to send her to, but she chose to go to a junior college in Modesto so that she could commute from home and I would not be worried. She commuted to the junior college for two years helping me at home. After graduating from the junior college she attended San Jose State University, but the war broke out after attending it for half a year.

Q: Did

Q: Did your son continue schooling?

A: Yes. He only helped during the summer vacation.



Q: Who took care of the accounts?

A: I did.

Q: Have you done that before?

A: No, I didn't know anything about it. I seldom went to banks.

At one time I was elected as a treasurer of the women's association and had to take care of the money. My husband used to take care of ~~the~~ account for me. Strangely enough, my husband took me to the post-office and the bank to show me how to take care of the business about a month before he passed away. I think he prepared me if anything should happen to him. I had learned these things from my husband, so I managed to get along. They told me at the bank that they will lend me money anytime I needed any. I had to pay the employees and send children to school, so I had a hard time. Fortunately I had some Japanese money in Japanese banks, so it helped. In those days there was not much expenditure, but the income was small, too. I managed to get by for 3 years.

The Mexican family who lived behind our house felt sorry for me and helped me. They fed our 5 horses early in the morning. When I cleaned the chicken coup the whole family came and helped me. When I mowed the lawn, their son helped me. I was very thankful and wanted to repay their kindness in some way, but 3 years later we had to go to the camp. I asked the people who leased the ranch to leave the Mexican family there, but they had to move. I think they made some money during the war and bought a house in town. They came to see me when I came back here after the war.



Q: Were there many things you didn't know when you had to manage the household after your husband died?

A: I didn't know anything. My husband used to write checks, and I didn't, so I had to learn to write checks. People at the bank in Livingston were kind to me, and told me to let them know if I didn't have enough money. But when the war broke out Japanese money was frozen. My children and nephew helped me much.

Q: What was the hardest thing for you when you took over the responsibilities?

A: It was the question of whether I should manage the ranch or not. My folks in Japan told me to sell the ranch and go back to Japan, but when I talked to my children they wanted me to stay here, and they would help me. I thought if I went back to Japan the life there will be different as I lived here so long, so I decided to stay here where the children were.

Q: It was a big decision, wasn't it?

A: Yes, I was led by my children. I was taking care of my nephew, and as he was of age I had worries. My son was 19 and daughter was 17. I warned them not to get in trouble until they were married. Niseis listened to their parents well. They learned Japanese so they could understand. Sanseis now can understand Japanese but they don't know how to write Japanese. I had much hardship, but I think God was protecting me because I didn't even get sick. I am very thankful.



Q: Did you still hire about 15 people at harvest time?

A: Before my husband died we started hiring Mexicans.

Q: How did you hire them?

A: Mexicans came here looking for jobs. My children could speak English so they helped me hire them.

Q: Did you tell them where to go to work?

A: My husband's friend Mr. Saida lived in this house, and he worked as a boss. He bought grape and took them to the market, but he helped us at his spare time until we evacuated. God had helped me in every way. I believed in God before, but when I experienced God's help I was really thankful to God. I was too busy to give thanks to God in the daytime, but when the day was over I was really thankful to God for being able to live that day with God's help. My children helped me a lot. My nephew, who never worked before worked hard, too. He is in New York now.

T: In the meantime Pearl Harbor was attacked.

O: That day Mr. Saida came home from outside and told us that the war broke out. We said, "You are kidding. It can't be true," but he told<sup>us</sup> that it was true. When we turned on the radio we found out that the war had really started. We were prohibited to go far, so my children could not go to school. My daughter was attending San Jose State University and my son was attending University of California.



Q: Was your son at home then?

A: He had not graduated yet. He graduated in December after we entered the camp in Merced. He received his diploma in the camp.

Q: How did you feel when the war broke out?

A: I didn't know what would become of us. We were told that we did not have to hurry as Livingston was in the White Zone. My friends and relatives wanted to come here as they thought we were in the White Zone, and asked me to let them stay even in the henhouse. I had enough trouble of my own, so I could take care of other people. I let only one relative live in my husband's brother's house for 2 to 3 months. We burned all the important papers as F.B.I. was coming.

Q: Who told you that you could not have this or that?

A: It was published in the paper. We were afraid we might be put in an internment camp if we were arrested by F.B.I. The neighbors decided to go to camp together leaving our fate to God. At night time I saw people working with bright lights on, and I wondered what they were doing. I found out that they were building the camp we were going to. White Zone or not, we all had to go to the assembly center. We could not take <sup>much</sup> ~~my~~ belongings, so we locked valuable things in the cellar, and left the furnitures behind.



Q: How did you feel when you entered the assembly center in Merced?

A: The soil here is sandy, but in Merced it was dirt, so when it rained it became very muddy and it was hard to walk. In less than a month I was stricken with appendicitis, and was hospitalized in the County Hospital in Merced. I had appendectomy and stayed in the hospital for ten days. My daughter was with me, so she nursed me after I came out of the hospital. Not long after that we went to Amache. As I was still recuperating, they told me that I can stay in an ambulance train, but I stayed in the same compartment with my family.

Q: Did you have three children then?

A: Two children and my nephew.

Q: They were all at marriage ages, weren't they?

A: My children were in colleges, and my nephew was attending Heald's College after graduating from highschool in Livingston.

Q: How old was your nephew?

A: He came here when he was 19, so he was round 22 or 23.

Q: Then he was the oldest, wasn't he?

A: Yes, he was, so I warned him not to get in trouble in the camp.



Q: What kind of thing did you tell him?

A: I told him to behave himself and not to give me any trouble. He said "Okay, Okay" and behaved himself without giving me any trouble. As he was not my own child, I was worried about such thing. I took care of him with love.

Q: What kind of thing did you do at Amache?

A: I was told to recuperate for about a month or two, so I was not working for a while. But as everybody worked I felt bad for not working, so I worked as a waitress at the mess hall. I volunteered to pick peas in the field where we were growing some vegetables. I also helped canning tomatoes. There were all kinds of schools, English, knitting, sewing and so forth. As I was not good at English I learned English, making artificial flowers and other things. I forgot the English, so I am still no good.

Q: What kind of difficulties did you have in the camp?

A: As we all lived together we had to be careful not to give others trouble. There were all kinds of people and all kinds of happenings.

Q: What kind of things happened?

A: There was an accident; a child was injured when they dug a well. That is why I was worried and told my children not to get in any trouble. My son worked, and my daughter went to a college in Greeley, Colorado with a special permission after we came to Amache as she went only half a year in a college in San Jose.



My son worked and earned tuition for his sister. I think when the parent is not alive the children feel the responsibilities. My daughter worked at a teacher's house during the summer vacation. She liked sewing, so she sewed some suits and made some spending money. At camp she helped canning. She graduated from college with everybody's help. After graduating she worked in Denver for a while. A relative told her that she had better stay with her mother and help her, so she came back to camp for a while. Then she went to work at a highschool in New York. My son helped farming near Greeley, and sent his sister to school.

Q: Did your daughter go to New York to go to school or to work?

A: She had finished school, so she went to work there. When I could come back here she came here with me.

Q: When did you come back here?

A: It was around November.

Q: What kind of hobby did you have in camp?

A: I studied English and sewing.

Q: What kind of thing you didn't like in camp?

A: Before I came to camp my friends were all from Livingston, but there were people from everywhere in the camp. But I made friends in English class. Our English teacher was bilingual, and students laughed at my pronunciation. I cannot say we had fun, but I was used to that kind of life.



I was really happy when I found out that we could come home, as I had given up hopes of coming back here. I was really thankful. People were still living in this house when we came back.

Q: What did you do with your land?

A: We leased it. The company helped us lease the land. When we came back all the tools were sold, so we had to buy all new farm tools. It took 4 to 5 years to buy new tractors and other tools.

Q: How many acres did you have?

A: We had 120 acres. We were not making much profit so it was hard, but my son could do a man's job, so my burden became lighter. After we came back here we had marriage problem, and the oldest one (my nephew) was married first. He took a wife from Petaluma. He is working as an engineer in New York now.

Q: Did your son go to New York, also?

A: No, my nephew went to New York as my daughter was working there, and he settled down there. I am thankful that I am well.

Q: What did you do first after you came home?

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A: People were still living in our house, so we lived in the tank house for a few days before they vacated the house. The house was in bad shape so we had to repair it. Then we had to buy farm impliments such as a tractor. My son had taken our car to Rocky Ford, Colorado, so he drove it back here. He graduated from a university but he took over his father's work and farmed. He studied engineering so he was good at fixing machinery.



Q: How was your ranch when you came back and started all over?

A: Fortunately we had good crops that year. I left the ranch in care of my son.

Q: Did your son manage the ranch after you came back?

A: Yes, I quit it after we went to the camp. My son has grown up, so I leave everything to him. I am leading a life of a retiree now.

Q: What was hard for you after you came home?

A: We didn't have anything left, so we had to buy everything. It was not my hardship but my son's. I think he did well.

Q: What did you like when you were in highschool?

A: We had to take all kinds of subjects whether we liked them or not.

Q: How were your teachers?

A: They were all good.

Q: What kind of fun did you have?

A: Everything was fun when I was in school. I went to school every day taking lunch my mother packed for me. I went out to play with my friends. We went to picnics together, and we had field days. After I came here I could not play. Looking back, I think I had a carefree life when I was young, without appreciating my parents. After I came here I appreciated my parents. I had hardships, but I think it was God's will, because if we do not experience hardship we do not appreciate anything.



Q: How was the relationship with the white people here?

A: They were all good as friends. Mr. Bloom who built this house was very kind to us. His son was my son's classmate. The white people in Livingston were very kind to us.

Q: Did any white people give you a hard time here or anywhere else?

A: No, not here. There were signs such as "Off Limit to Japs" in Delhi, but as friends they were kind. Now Niseis and Sandeis can understand English, so they are associating with them as good friends.

Q: What kind of sad experience did you have?

A: It was that I could not understand English. I always thought I should study English, but I was so busy that I did not have time to study. I learned some English at school so I read some books once in a while.

Q: What kind of fun did you have when you first came here?

A: The only thing I enjoyed was going to church or women's meeting and listen to sermon or lectures with friends.

Q: Was Mrs. Okue's father here when you came here?

A: Yes. When I came here grandfather visited us and presenting us with a Bible asked us to read it. I cannot forget that.



Q: Was he a kind man?

A: Yes, he was. He was a Christian, and he tried to lead us to become Christians. Mr. Okue and Mr. Naka used to come to our house and taught us gospels. In that way we began to learn about Christianity and we started to go to church. After my husband died I have been attending church as much as I can.

Q: Did you ever become homesick when you first came here?

A: I was too busy to get homesick.

Q: Did you have intention of going back to Japan when you first came here?

A: I went back there after 15 years with my children during the summer vacation and stayed there for a month. I had a cook at home so I was not worried.

Q: Were you very happy when you went home?

A: Yes, I was very happy. I was still young so felt like a school girl.

T: You were still around 35 years old then.

O: We took a boat ride with my neighbor and her children and my classmate of highschool and her children and had a good time. I went back to Japan in 1965 again.



Q: Was Japan changed when you went back there after the war?

A: It was completely changed. My village is a town now.

Q: When you were in camp some Niseis went into service. Didn't your son go into service?

A: He did not go because he had to help me with farming. He went to Greeley, Colorado with 3 or 4 partners and farmed. Then he farmed at Rocky Ford.

Q: What did you think about Niseis going into service?

A: At that time the parents thought it was unreasonable that the government put Niseis into camps and then take them in services. But the Citizens' League said if we do not pledge royalty to America, Japanese would be discriminated forever. That is why some Niseis volunteered to go into service. A while later I heard that some Niseis who volunteered died in the war. I felt very sorry for them, but later I knew that because they pledge royalty to America we could come home. Thanks to the Citizens' League we could acquire our American citizenship. When my husband died I was not a citizen, so I had to transfer the land ownership to my children. After we came home we could acquire our citizenship, so I studied, passed the test and received my citizenship. I don't understand English too well, but I go to the poll every time there is an election.



T: I think it is very important that you acquire the citizenship.

Q: Yes. It has been 21 years since I acquired the citizenship.

Q: Are you very happy to be an American citizen?

A: Some Japanese people looked sad when they renounced their Japanese citizenship. My children told me to take a test with other Japanese, so I went to church and studied under Rev. Nakamura and passed the test.

Q: Do you want Sanseis to learn about Japan?

A: I wanted to teach them Japanese, so I bought many books, but I did not have an opportunity to do so as the children were busy and I was busy, too. I did not teach them any Japanese, but as we live together they learned Japanese naturally. When I use some difficult words they ask their parents what the word mean. After their parents explained what the word meant they would use the word right away. They speak Japanese just as well as English.

Q: Do you think it is important for them to be aware of being Japanese?

A: They must think it is fun to be able to understand Japanese as they live with grandmother. My daughter-in-law went to school in Japan during the war so she understands Japanese well, too. The children do not have any difficulties in understanding Japanese, but they do not know how to write Japanese.



Q: When did you decide to settle down in America permanently?

A: After my husband died I was going back to Japan, but my children did not want to go. If I had gone back by myself I would have been very lonely even though I had a house. To settle down permanently I should have the citizenship, so I studied.

Q: Did you intend to return to Japan before then?

A: I think my husband had an intention to go back to Japan after giving ~~the~~ ranch to the children. But it did not work that way so I decided to stay here permanently, and return to Japan once in a while to visit the graves of ancestors. That is why I went to Japan ten years ago.

Q: When was the hardest time since you came to America?

A: It was that I couldn't make myself understood.